

Get The Best From Your GP

1. Ask yourself?
Is it important I'm seen quickly or would I be better waiting for an appointment with a particular GP? This may be more important if you have a long term condition that would benefit from a GP who knows your history personally.
2. Don't be put off by a GP who runs late - they may be spending needed time with patients.
3. It's tempting to bring a list of unrelated problems, but consider what's achievable in 10 minutes. More than one appointment may be required.
4. Before you see the GP, clearly formulate in your own mind what you're worried about and highlight any particular concerns.
5. Consider preparing short notes, including how you would describe your symptoms.
6. Bring a list of any medication you're taking, including pills bought over the counter or alternative medicines.
7. Get to the point: don't feel you have to justify being there ('my husband/wife was worried'), or save important issues until the end.
8. Wear accessible clothing if you're likely to need to undress for examination.
9. Make sure you fully understand the next steps before you leave the room - you can always ask to go through the plan again.
10. If you're not happy, you can ask to see a second GP. You can also change GP practices without having to explain why.
11. Many practices offer services through nursing or pharmacy staff, rather than waiting to see a GP - for example to stop smoking. The practice leaflet should list the services offered.
12. To have more say in the running of the practice, ask if there is a patient participation group.

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